

**Swans Island Trap Limit Advisory Committee
Annual Meeting
Swans Island Firehouse
June 10, 2003 – 1:00 p.m.**

A meeting of the Swans Island Trap Limit Advisory Committee (Committee) was held on this date at the Swans Island Atlantic Firehouse. Attendees included (according to sign-up sheet): Chairman Kevin Staples, Spencer Joyce, David Lemoine, Randy Sawyer, Deputy Commissioner David Etnier, Terry Stockwell, Lt. Alan Talbot, MPO Specialist Troy Dow, Sarah Cotnoir, Sonny Sprague, Joshua Joyce, Ben Doliber, Myron Sprague, James Wheaton, Kenneth Lemoine, II, Richard Davis, Jerry Smith, Jason Matthews, Galen Staples, Vernon Johnson, Clay Savage, Phil Dziezyk, Paul Crossman, Daniel Johnson, Carroll Staples, Dale Stockbridge, Jr., Isaac Stinson, Carl Lemoine, Gary Turner, Dale Stockbridge, Sr., Ted Turner, David Carlson, Cindy Turner and Jason Joyce.

The meeting convened at 1:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (April 4, 2003 meeting)

The last Committee meeting was held on April 4, 2003.

MOTION: (Kevin Staples and Ben Doliber) To accept the minutes of the April 4, 2003 meeting as written. Unanimous.

Vote on Board Members

The current Committee composition of 5 members includes:

- Chairman Kevin Staples (Swans Island Lobsterman)
- David Lemoine (Swans Island Lobsterman)
- Vacant (Swans Island Lobsterman) Dale Stockbridge, Sr. resigned from the Committee last summer.
- Randy Sawyer (Frenchboro Lobsterman)
- Vacant (Commissioner Appointment)

Nominations took place to replace Stockbridge's seat on the Committee.

Spencer Joyce – (Nominated by Joshua Joyce & seconded by Ben Doliber)

Phil Dziezyk – (Nominated by Clay Savage & seconded by Spencer Joyce)

Results of voting:

Spencer Joyce – Received 18 votes

Phil Dziezyk – Received 5 votes

Members present elected Spencer Joyce by majority vote to serve out Stockbridge's remaining term.

Terms:

MOTION: (Ben Doliber and Phil Dziezyk) To accept the following terms limits for elected Committee members. Unanimous.

One-year terms: Kevin Staples & Spencer Joyce

Two-year terms: David Lemoine & Randy Sawyer

Discuss Changing the Size of the Board

There was some discussion to consider increasing the number of members on the Committee to 7. It was agreed to maintain the current composition of 5 members.

Discuss Appointing Independent Secretary for Keeping Minutes

The Committee would like to appoint an independent secretary to take minutes at future meetings. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact a member of the Committee. Sarah Cotnoir of DMR will take minutes of today's annual meeting.

Discuss Different Color Trap Tags for the Students

A suggestion was made for student lobster license holders to use different colored trap tags, not only for Swans Island, but statewide. This would allow only the students to fish their own traps, preventing scenarios such as other family members fishing the student's traps. It would not be worth losing your license to fish 25 student traps off shore. Marine Patrol concurred that colored tags may help in those circumstances.

Members voted whether they supported different colored trap tags for students, resulting in 20-1 in favor of the colored tags.

Season limits for students were also a concern. Certain times of the year when students are in school, who is fishing those traps? Should those traps remain in the water? Sometimes gear sits all year.

Discuss Independent Party Holding 10% Replacement Tags

Rather than continue getting replacement tags from DMR, the recent questionnaire results reflect that 64% of those who responded want to have the replacement tags held by an independent party on Swans Island. This would avoid the two-week turnaround time getting replacement tags. Dexter Lee at the Swans Island Town Office was suggested as a person to hold the replacement tags.

There was a concern about the availability of getting replacement tags with the Town Office's hours. Leaving a written certificate of loss at the Town Office to pick up the tags the next day would still be faster.

The Committee has heard reports that people are already fishing their replacement tags. The question was raised whether they could avoid both issues of raising the trap limit and possession of replacement tags, by allowing everyone to fish their replacement tags. This proposal would allow fishermen a maximum of 522 tags (475 plus 47 replacement tags) and not be eligible to purchase any replacement tags at all. In the event of a catastrophic loss, you would only be able to get the 475, which is a gamble. Lt. Talbot from the Marine Patrol advised that fishing of the replacement tags is currently illegal.

Whether the trap limit was raised to 600 or people were allowed to fish their replacement tags (at a maximum of 522 tags), the Committee would need to go through the same public process to change the regulation. It would not be implemented for this fishing season since people have already purchased their tags.

Even in zones where 800 is the trap limit, with 80 replacement tags, people are fishing the 880 traps. It is difficult to enforce. A suggestion was made that people should cut old tags off every year.

Another issue was raised that sending 47 replacements for each license holder to DMR, then DMR sending them to Dexter to sort out may be complicating. A suggestion was made to send enough replacement tags for 30-40 license holders to Dexter and let him distribute and record the information.

Would different colored replacement tags be a manufacturer's nightmare?

This item will be tabled until the Committee can discuss further.

Discuss Trap Limit Number

The Committee reviewed the questionnaire results:

Trap limit	Stay at 475	Raise to 600	Replacement Tags	Up front	Held by independent party
	33 56%	26 44%		21 36%	37 64%

Attendees were encouraged to consider what is best for Swans Island, not what is best for them personally.

Raising the trap limit to 600 and having the replacement tags held by an independent party was proposed. Would 600 really mean 660?

If a trap limit increase was proposed to the Department, two public hearings would be scheduled plus there would be a written comment period. The whole process takes about 90 days before it goes before the DMR Advisory Council in Hallowell.

With increasing costs in health care, boat costs, trap costs, etc., and fishing is your only income, it is challenging to make a good living on 475 traps. Without some sort of supplemental income (spouse working, part time/seasonal job, other types of fishing, etc.), it is difficult to live on only 475 traps.

This trap limit was set a long time ago based on landings of 28 million pounds, not the 57 million pounds we are at today.

What if we don't have a good year? The extra traps may help.

With faster boats, we are losing traditional bottom. We are being squeezed between western Sister and John Island. If we have not already set by October, the Sunshine fishermen say it is their space. They get their shedders earlier in the Bay, and then they head our way. We are going to have to start cutting back on gear in order to claim our bottom early. It is not the money; we are just getting squeezed out of traditional Swans Island bottom.

Some of the fishermen here now don't fish 475 traps. However, with an increase in the trap limit, they can buy the extra gear and set it earlier, before the Sunshine fishermen come in.

Passing the Swans Island bill would have satisfied many of the fishermen; however, we may have potentially lost the conservation lines in the next legislative session.

This item will be tabled until the Committee can discuss further.

Vote on How Often Committee Should Meet

Attendees agreed that the Committee should meet at a minimum of four (4) times per year, plus the Annual Meeting.

Other

- There should be a Swans Island representative on the Zone B Lobster Zone Management Council.
- All Trap Limit Meeting Minutes should be forwarded to the DMR to keep in their files.
- Swans Island has been desirable at 475. What if they agree to 600? Would there be an escalation of people coming in? Randy Sawyer out of Frenchboro did not think that would happen.
- When the limit was set at 475, that was when fishermen were using wooden traps and didn't have the technology available.

Originally, the limit was: 600 traps for double boats } 25 replacement
500 traps for single boats } tags

Then to: 500 double }
400 single } Somewhere
Then to: 400 double } in here, it
300 single } went to
10% replacement
tags

Then back up to 475 traps.

- Maybe consider 25 replacement tags for 600 traps.
- Concern of losing trap limits altogether.
- Need to update regulation regarding Certificate of Registration to state that new tags need to be put on by June 1st of each year and expire on May 31st the following year. Currently, the regulation states that March 1st is the date for new tags, expiring on February 28th.
- Discussion about two lobster license holders fishing off the same boat. Is fishing as a sternman legal? Can a commercial license holder assist on another commercial license holder's boat? This was never made a regulation.
- The Committee needs to review and propose updates for Swans Island regulations.
- The Committee will make the affected public aware of the time and place of its meetings.

The Committee will be meeting again in the next couple weeks to further discuss the replacement tags and the trap limit.

The meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.